

# **Summary Report on Workshop**

## **Sustainable Development in Lake Areas: Empowering Local Initiatives and Civil Society**



**21 - 25 April 2010**

**Bled, Slovenia**

## Summary report

28 participants from twelve European countries met in Triglav National Park in beautiful North Western Slovenia for the third workshop of the „Lake Project“.

### *The participants represented...*

- ☞ several large conservation projects in Romania, Hungary, Greece, Poland, Germany and England, organized in Global Nature Fund's Living Lakes network
- ☞ civil society projects in Macedonia, Austria and Germany, organized in the Forum Synergies network
- ☞ municipalities and public administration in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Germany and Poland (from both networks)
- ☞ Marburg University (Germany). Two students contributed an overview about „environmental communication“.

An additional large group of participants from Estonia, Latvia, Turkey and China could not show up due to air traffic restrictions after a volcano eruption in Iceland.

For a conference venue we were invited to the building of the Triglav National Park administration whose director Martin Šolar had the kindness to welcome us at the beginning, provided coffee for workshop breaks and sent a competent local guide for our field trips. The workshop was moderated by Titus Bahner (Forum Synergies) and Tillmann Stottele (Global Nature Fund).



More workshop photos can be accessed online<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> at [picasaweb.google.de](https://picasaweb.google.de), for login type user = fs.bled2010, password = workshopbled.

## First Day: Participants' Experiences

Mr. Dusan Kramberger from the Slovenian Ministry of Culture opened the first conference day with a presentation about participation strategies in a UNESCO Cultural Heritage denomination project about historical pile dwellings near Ljubljana, stating that open communication with the (beforehand very sceptical) population had been essential to the project's final success. 40 other heritage site applications had been dropped by the government due to local resistance.

The rest of the morning was dedicated to the mutual presentation of participants.

In the afternoon there was a first field trip to see the 25 km distant Lake Bohinj by foot and by boat, the largest natural lake in Slovenia and one of the sources of the Slovenian main river Sava. A Triglav National Park ranger explained the geological and ecological situation of the lake and actual threats to ecological treasures caused by construction plans on the lake shore. Tourism development so far had concentrated to Bled and Lake Bled which were situated outside the National Park; now there seemed to be an increasing pressure by some influential local leaders to develop facilities inside the park or nearby, attracting non-sustainable activities like ski lifts, cross country motorcycling or very large (50+) mountain hiking groups. The concept of sustainable tourism seemed to be an obvious solution but not really well known to the local decision makers. Instead of an active promotion the situation seemed to be marked by the National Park administration's struggle to restrict damage to the park on the one hand and some local beneficiaries' attempts to attract external investors for large scale tourism infrastructure investments regardless of their impact on local sustainability on the other side.



## Second Day: Identifying Fields for Cooperation

The morning of the second conference day was dedicated to a more in-depth presentation of conservation projects with respect to the participation issue. There were presentations about Triglav National Park (Slovenia), Somogy and Boronka area (Hungary), Nestos Delta (Greece), Water Framework Implementation (Germany), Maramures National Park (Romania), Barycz Valley and Milicz Ponds (Poland). It became obvious that most successful projects are based on close cooperation between environmental experts, local citizens, local administration and



external founders, driven by active NGO actors that are competent to both include administrations and the local community into the project. Also most projects organize environmental education programmes for children and adults and sustainable tourism activities.

After lunch in a local restaurant the participants engaged in a 7x7 words exercise, simulating stakeholder negotiations by trying to agree on seven words that would complete the two following phrases:

- 1) I'm interested in a cooperation project about...
- 2) Participation is successful if there is...

Building on the resulting answers to the first question, three working groups were formed to brainstorm goals and coalitions for follow-up thematic exchange projects. The most favoured thematic areas were *environmental education, rural-/eco-tourism* and *habitat management*.

At the evening a Slovenian folk-music and dance presentation was scheduled at the hotel. Later a large group took a walk around Lake Bled at night.

### Third Day: Follow-Up Commitments

The third conference day started with a presentation of Titus Bahner and Simone Matouch about Forum Synergies' communication strategies in view of the upcoming reform of the EU agricultural policies. They invited the participants to contribute to the 'ARC' process of gathering practical messages from the countryside as an input for decision makers in EU parliament and EU commission (see [www.arc2020.eu](http://www.arc2020.eu)).

Then the working groups from yesterday presented the following results (seperate summaries available):

*Environmental education:* Two case studies were presented by Polish and Hungarian participants. An active experience exchange could take place including e.g. carp days in Poland, school twinning UK, GNF programme "Schools for Living Lakes" etc. The group exchanged on the experiences which can be shared and developed following ideas as start vision of the projects: wine roads, bird watching, photographic tour, handicraft production, collecting mushrooms, cycling, hiking, testing traditional (local) food, horse riding, cheese roads, fishing, bio-energy village, and botanic tours.

*Rural / Eco-Tourism:* The group identified differences in scope and approach between eco-tourism and rural tourism. There are international guidelines to be used like e.g. the EUROPARC European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected

Areas<sup>2</sup> or the PAN Parks Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy<sup>3</sup>. The group agreed to set up a Google Groups forum for the discussion of next steps.



*Habitat Management.* An exchange project could focus on wetland management and conservation of cultural heritage, and would combine on-site expert coaching with practical conservation activities (e.g. work camps). An outcome could be a book in 2-3 languages and the organisation of a side event to the Ramsar Conference of Parties in Romania 2012. Meanwhile the group has prepared a draft project proposal “Exchange for Europe’s Nature Conservation”.

After a concluding evaluation round (see below) the afternoon was dedicated to an extended foot walk to beautiful Voje valley in Triglav national park along a wild mountain stream that had carved a deep canyon into the limestone, again guided by a national park ranger who explained many more details about the local successes, problems and attitudes in visitor education and park management.

## Evaluation

In the concluding workshop evaluation many participants emphasized their regret about the low Slovenian participation. On the positive side the diversity of the rest of the participants and the liveliness of the exchange was welcomed. Also the structure of the workshop with much space for participants’ own contributions and the absence of time pressure in the programme were acknowledged. In a final round about “how do I feel and what do I take away from here” participants particularly mentioned many new contacts, much inspiration and also concrete plans for successive exchange activities.



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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.europarc.org/what-we-do/european-charter-for>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.panparks.org/learn/apply\\_for\\_verification/principles\\_and\\_criteria](http://www.panparks.org/learn/apply_for_verification/principles_and_criteria)



# Workshop

## Sustainable Development in Lake Areas: Empowering Local Initiatives and Civil Society



**21 - 25 April 2010**  
**Bled, Slovenia**

Supported by





## Welcome!

Forum Synergies and Global Nature Fund cordially invite you to a series of four workshops on participatory implementation strategies of environmental policies in lake areas, taking place in Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and France.

The workshops are meant to empower civil society actors to contribute to participatory sustainable development, and shall yield recommendations to local and EU governments about more participatory ways to implement environmental policies.

## Goals and Objectives

The workshops are organised in the framework of the project “Sustainable Development in Lake Areas”, which is supported by Fondation de France.

The general objective of the project is to support initiatives in sustainable development by exchange on good practice of participatory implementation and local sustainable development. The exchange shall lead to capacity building of private actors, NGOs and local governments in environmentally sensitive areas.

The thematic workshops will contribute to the development of local democracy and to a more participative management of environmental resources, in order to fill the gap between European citizens and their institutions, and also via feed-back to decision makers to contribute to environmental and rural policies that better meet peoples’ need for participation.

The project’s objectives are

- ☞ to exchange experiences about different participatory implementation strategies of Nature 2000 and Water Framework Directive (WFD) in concerned rural areas
- ☞ to give local actors and authorities better access to practical knowledge about sustainable Nature 2000 and WFD implementation strategies via exchange with successful projects
- ☞ to develop political proposals to regional, state and EU governments to use the existing participatory options that are provided from EU-side in order to support sustainable development in rural areas.

The scientific partnership with University of Marburg / Germany assures that the project integrates political knowledge of integrated water body management.



## Background

### Empowerment of Local Actors

Sustainable development depends on actors – actors that are willing to persistently strive for sustainable ways of life in their daily behaviour and take initiative to generate renewable energy, consume locally grown & organic food, use tourism services that save energy and look for ways of a sustainable life style. Since economic regional development is one crucial pillar of sustainability, governments depend on local initiatives of people and civil society organizations to turn the chances of regulative frameworks and accompanying funding policies into practical action. Therefore an exchange about best practice in motivation and integration of local actors is an important contribution to sustainable rural development and the empowerment of civil society. An exchange between old and new EU member state participants seems particularly useful in this respect since it combines long-term knowledge about EU regulation practices with newly emerging civil society movements.

### Participatory Processes

The Aarhus convention, signed in 1998 by most European countries, invites authorities to enhance the public participation in decision-making related with environmental issues. The Natura 2000 network (based on the 'Habitat' and the 'Birds' directives) is requesting from national governments to protect species and habitats of common interest by preserving their current existence. It does not specify by which measures and thereby leaves room for participatory implementation. The European Water Framework Directive is requesting from national states to achieve a "good ecological state" for all surface water bodies until 2015. It expects explicitly the implementation of an active public participation. The three directives – and especially the Habitat Directive – are in many cases seen as very critical by farming organisations and local governments who fear economical constraints. On the other hand, at the local level the participatory implementation options frequently are unknown to the relevant actors because of lack of good examples.

### Lake Areas

Lakes, river basins and coastal areas are good topics for exchange workshops about participatory implementation strategies because they fall usually under both Natura 2000 and water framework regulation, they give a common thematic focus, are of high public relevance and give room for integrated development approaches. Furthermore there tend to be serious conflicts of interest between different stakeholders, giving need for mediation and participatory conflict solution. More specifically, a common problem of European lakes is eutrophication from agricultural sources. EU regulation (Nitrogen directive) requests farmers since 2000 to restrict fertilization in order to prevent nutrient runoff to ground and surface waters. But there are implementation deficits, and big leftovers from former times pose a question of acceptable cleanup strategies. All this gives reason to look for more participatory implementation.





## The Workshop Sites

The map shows the partners, the workshop sites and the site of the co-ordinating project office. The project's four partner sites, of which Lake Võrtsjärv and Milicz ponds are members of Global Nature Fund's Living Lakes network, show the context of the project in different ways.

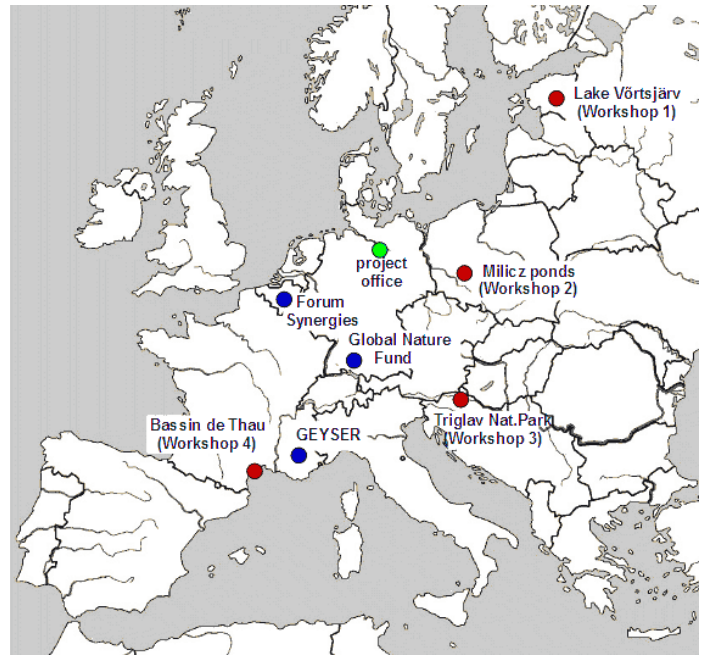
Lake Võrtsjärv near Tartu in Estonia, the biggest inner-Estonian lake, is mainly used by fishermen from the five surrounding villages with some recently evolving soft tourism and recreational activities. Nutrient intakes from the last decades caused heavy mud deposits in the shallow lake, deteriorating the water quality especially in summers with a thread of oxygen crises, and causing a reed belt of more than 100 meters to grow on its shore, preventing inhabitants to access the lake as they used to. There is need for an ecologically adapted solution under participation of the different interest groups.

The Milicz ponds near Wrocław in Poland are a great lake area that has been created by medieval monks for aquaculture. Nowadays they create an almost natural environment

with very large numbers of birds and also plant species on the surrounding wetlands. Several ecological NGOs are active in the area and they initiated the LEADER+ process. Involvement of many partners range from environmental farming, fisheries and tourism to habitat improvements and conservation plans. The workshop will take place during the Carp Days – annual event promoting local products and the Barycz Valley region as a place for quiet enjoyment of the rich environment.

Lakes Bled and Bohinj are glacial lakes in the Julian Alps in northwestern Slovenia. Lake Bled (Blejsko jezero in Slovene) with 145 ha surface belongs to Bled town which is a very popular tourist destination. Lake Bohinj (Bohinjsko jezero), situated 25 km west of lake Bled in the borders of Triglav National Park and with 318 ha the largest permanent lake in Slovenia, is still quite natural but suffers of increasing pressure from urbanism and tourism. We expect to learn from the National Park Administration's ideas about sustainable lake management, Alpine land use and economic development. This workshop will also be an opportunity for exchange between international NGOs about participatory development experiences in lake areas.

Thau basin (Bassin de Thau) near Montpellier is the largest lagoon on the Mediterranean coast of France and one of the largest French lakes. The shallow lagoon experiences a high pressure of uses from fishery, mussel cultivation, agricultural land use and nutrient intakes from its catchment area, but also recreational use from its densely populated surroundings. Needs for better water quality and for preservation of its ecological value for breeding and migratory birds are obvious. There are conflicts of interest around Thau lagoon – but also significant possible coalitions of interest e.g. between environmentalists and fish and mussel farmers.





## Structure of the Workshops

After arrival of the participants in the afternoon of the first day and a welcoming evening, the workshops proceed in three steps.

On the first day the host organisation presents their situation and the foreign guests pose questions to better understand the situation and relate it to their own experiences. The participants are taken to a first field trip to get a more practical feeling about the local situation.

The second day allows the international guests to contribute their views, ideas and experiences with respect to the local situation. Another field trip brings the participants to local initiatives and civil society groups to talk with them about their vision, their practical options and the specific local obstacles to their engagement.

The third morning session is dedicated to politics: How can national and EU policies support local actors to take up the challenge of sustainable development? Towards the end of the session the moderators try to crystallise conclusions in order to formulate a valuable feedback to EU decision makers.

In order to enable the local public to participate in the meeting there is a political evening with a public presentation of the foreign guests and with latest information about EU political tendencies. Local politicians, national and EU governmental officials are invited to explain their view on possible support for sustainable development initiatives. A cultural event with presentation of local culture and room for talk and drinking gives participants a direct contact to the people.

## Workshop Dates

①	Lake Võrtsjärv, Estonia	15-18 June 2009
②	Milicz Ponds, Poland	21-24 October 2009
③	Triglav National Park, Slovenia	21-25 April 2010
④	Thau Basin, France	22-25 September 2010

## Conference Venue Triglav National Park

The conference will take place at the headquarters of Triglav National Park administration in Bled. Accommodation is provided in Hotel Jelovica Bled (foot walking distance). Field trips to lake Bled & lake Bohinj are organised by foot and by buses.

*Logistics:* Next train station with international connections is Lesce Bled (4 km from venue). Closest airports are Ljubljana (LJU) and Klagenfurt (KLU). From Ljubljana airport there are public buses, either directly to Bled at 12:00 or 17:30 (ca. 45 Min, see [www.zup-prevozi.eu](http://www.zup-prevozi.eu)), or with change at Kranj leaving every hour (see [www.ap-ljubljana.si](http://www.ap-ljubljana.si) or [www.alpetour.si](http://www.alpetour.si)).

## Participation Fee

Due to the support by the Fondation de France, no conference fee for participation will arise, and invited participants may be granted a 50% reimbursement on their travel costs.

Since the number of possible participants is limited to about 40, please consider your early registration at [lakeproject@forum-synergies.eu](mailto:lakeproject@forum-synergies.eu).



## Hosting Organisations, Supporters and Partners

### Forum Synergies

Forum Synergies is a European network of practical pioneers in many aspects of sustainable rural development that has gathered rich and varied practical experiences since 1994. Forum Synergies holds contacts to different rural organisations as well as to policy makers on EU level, turning practical experiences into an input for the evolution of EU sustainability policies.

### Global Nature Fund (GNF) and Living Lakes Network

GNF was founded in 1998 with the objective to foster the protection of nature and environment as well as animals. GNF's work consists mainly of initiating and implementing nature and environment protection projects to preserve the animal world, the protection of migrating species, their habitat and their migratory routes.

In 1998 the Living Lakes network has been launched by Global Nature Fund. At the moment there are 45 partner lakes represented by more than 55 member organisations. Our vision is that all lakes, wetlands and freshwater bodies of the world should be healthy ecosystems and being used in a sustainable way.

### Triglav National Park

Triglav National Park is located in North-Western Slovenia, covering 4% of the country's territory around Slovenia's highest mountain. The National Park is among the earliest European parks; the first protection dates back to 1924. The principal task of the Triglav National Park Public Institution is the protection of the park, but it also carries out specialist and research tasks.

### DPPVN Society of bird research and nature protection

The Slovenian environmental NGO DPPVN cares for conservation and restoration of endangered animal and plant habitats and proposes the establishment of protected areas. DPPVN organizes various forms of ecological education, arranges special conferences, workshops in the field of animal studies and conservation, and raises public awareness of wildlife. DPPVN publish also scientific journal for biology and ecology Biota.

### Fondation de France

Fondation de France was established in 1969 to encourage the growth of private philanthropy as an intermediary partner. The foundation sets up action programs in many fields: solidarity, the elderly or disabled, and for the benefit of children. Fondation de France also promotes professionalism in the management of the voluntary sector in France and Europe.

### GEYSER

Since 1983, the French non-profit association Geyser is strengthening innovative social practices in rural areas in France and abroad. Its members and staff coordinate networks and working groups, implement training sessions for local actors and build bridges between practitioners, researchers and policy makers. Currently, Geyser is working mainly in the fields of environmental mediation, participatory democracy and ethnoecology.



# Programme

Wednesday, 21. April 2010

## Welcome

18:00	Arrival of participants
19:00	Check-in and dinner
20:00	<p><b>Welcome from the hosts - Introduction of programme</b></p> <p><i>Martin Šolar, Triglav National Park</i>  <i>Milan Vogrin, DPPVN / Danube Environmental Forum</i>  <i>Udo Gattenlöhner, Global Nature Fund</i>  <i>Titus Bahner, Forum Synergies</i></p>

Thursday, 22. April 2010

## Workshop Day I: Lakes and Wetlands in Slovenia

8:00	Breakfast
9:00	<p><b>Introduction to Lakes in Slovenia – Challenges &amp; Possible Solutions</b></p> <p><i>Andrej Sovinc, Head, Secovlje Salina Nature Park</i></p>
9:45	<p><b>Sustainable Development of Lakes and Wetlands in Slovenia</b></p> <p>Presentations of regional experts (10 minutes each plus discussion) focusing on ecological situation, legislation, protection status, economic activities in the catchment areas, main threats, stakeholder conflicts, approaches to participatory sustainable processes</p> <p><i>Moderation: Udo Gattenlöhner (GNF)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Triglav Lakes: Lake Bled, Lake Bohinj <i>Dr. Anton Brancelj (tbc.)</i></li> <li>☞ Lake Ptuj and Lake Ormoz</li> <li>☞ Cerknica</li> </ul>
11:00	Coffee Break
11:30	<p><i>Presentations continued</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Bobovek</li> <li>☞ Koseski bajer (Ljubljana)</li> <li>☞ Mavcice and Zbilje reservoirs or others (Zovnjek, Vogrscek, Klivnik, Bukovnicko jezero, Podpesko, Idrijsko, Slivnicko jezero)</li> </ul>
12:30	Lunch



14:00	<p><b>Field trip</b> Transfer to lake Bohinj. Walk to see the lake and ecological situation. Discussion with Nature2000 manager and representatives of important stakeholder groups (e.g. farming, tourism development) <i>Guide: Triglav National Park Ranger, translation provided</i></p>
16:30	Coffee Break
17:00	<p><b>Sustainable Development at Triglav Lakes - towards a more detailed understanding</b> Exchanging field trip impressions, question round with local experts <i>Moderation: Tillmann Stottele (GNF)</i></p>
18:30	Dinner
20:00	<p>Political Evening (public event) <b>Sustainable Development at Slovenian Lakes against the background of EU Regulation and EU Integration</b> <i>Panel Discussion (translation provided)</i> <i>Moderation: Titus Bahner, Forum Synergies</i> Speakers from Triglav National Park, Bled Municipality, European Commission, Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, local associations (<i>to be named</i>)</p>
<p>Friday, 23. April 2010 <b>Workshop Day II: Participatory Development Options - European Experiences</b></p>	
8:00	Breakfast
9:00	<p><i>Keynote Presentations and Discussion</i> <b>Open Doors but no Visitors?</b> How to foster active stakeholder participation in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000 against the reality of different national strategies. <i>N.N., European Commission</i> Approaches to a better cooperation of lake-related NGOs in Europe. <i>N.N., NGO</i></p>
10:30	Coffee Break
11:00	<p><i>Presentations (10' minutes and discussion)</i> <b>NGO Experiences with Stakeholder Participation in Lake Regions</b> <i>Moderation: Titus Bahner (FS)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ N.N., CIPRA</li> <li>☞ N.N., Europarc</li> <li>☞ N.N., Lake Constance Foundation</li> </ul>



	☞ N.N., Deutsche Umwelthilfe (German Environmental Help)
12:30	Lunch
14:00	<i>Group work</i> <b>Capacity Building &amp; Participatory Development in Lake Areas</b> Approaches to an effective Cooperation between NGOs, Community- and Governmental Actors in Europe aiming at Sustainable Development of Lake and Wetland Areas using Participatory Approaches <i>Moderation: Tillmann Stottele (GNF) &amp; Titus Bahner (FS)</i>
16:00	Coffee Break
16:30	<b>Presentation of Group Results and Plenary Discussion</b> on the European Context <i>Moderation: Tillmann Stottele (GNF) &amp; Titus Bahner (FS)</i>
18:30	Dinner
20:00	<b>Social Evening with Cultural Programme</b>

Saturday, 24. April 2010

## Workshop Day III: The Case for European Cooperation

8:00	Breakfast
	<i>15' presentation and discussion</i> <b>Invitation to Practitioners</b>
9:00	Forum Synergies' communication strategy in view of the 2013 reform of the EU common agricultural policy (CAP) <i>Titus Bahner (FS)</i>
9:30	<i>Group work, plenary</i> <b>Partner Constellations and Commitments for Cooperation Activities</b> <i>Moderation: Tillmann Stottele &amp; Udo Gattenlöhner (GNF)</i>
11:00	Coffee Break
11:30	<b>Workshop Evaluation and Next Steps</b> Consolidation of workshop results and outlook to next workshop in France <i>Moderation: Tillmann Stottele (GNF) &amp; Titus Bahner (FS)</i>
12:30	Lunch
14:00	<i>Half-day walking tour</i> <b>Lake Bohinj and Triglav National Park: Landscape, Ecology and Sustainable Development</b>



	<i>guided by Triglav National Park Rangers</i>
19:00	Dinner
20:00	Open Evening
Sunday, 25. April 2010	
<b>Departure</b>	
8:00	Breakfast
9:00	Departures



## General Information

Time Zone	Central European Time = Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus 1 hour
Weather	The weather in Slovenia differs a lot. The average temperatures for April range from 15°C to 25°C. You may find some helpful weather forecast at <a href="http://meteo.arso.gov.si/met/en/">http://meteo.arso.gov.si/met/en/</a> (good and reliable also in English).
Workshop Language	The workshop language will be English.
Currency	Euro
Communication	The international code for Slovenia is +386. Mobile phone networks cover most areas.
Electricity	Voltage is 220 V, Plugs C & F. Information on adapters and plugs is available under <a href="http://kropla.com/electric2.htm">http://kropla.com/electric2.htm</a>

## Address of Conference Venue

### Hotel Jelovica Bled

Cesta Svobode 8  
 SI-4260 Bled, Slovenia  
 Phone: +386-4-5796-000, Fax: +386-4-5741-550  
 Email: [jelovica@hotel-jelovica.si](mailto:jelovica@hotel-jelovica.si)  
 Website [www.hotel-jelovica.si](http://www.hotel-jelovica.si)

## Hosts and Conference Team

### Triglav National Park

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### Forum Synergies

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 Website: [www.forum-synergies.eu](http://www.forum-synergies.eu)

### Global Nature Fund - International Foundation for Environment and Nature

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